.225 Winchester

Historical Notes The .225 Winchester was officially announced in June, 1964. However, as is usually the case, production rifles and ammunition were not available until some months later. A standard sporter and heavier varmint version of the new Model 70 bolt action were the initial arms chambered for the round. Winchester has indicated the new .225 will replace the older .220 Swift. The cartridge is described as of "semi-rimmed construction," actually looking more like a rimmed type with normal extraction lip. Rim diameter is .095 inch larger than the .222 Remington, or about the same as most .30-06 class cartridges (.473"). Maximum average operating pressure is given as 52,000 psi so it is strictly in the high velocity-high intensity class. Barrels have a 1-14 twist.

General Comments The .220 Swift, introduced by Winchester in 1936, has never achieved great popularity. Although possessed of really top flight long range performance and the highest velocity of any commercial cartridge, it also had its faults. For a .22, the Swift has a very sharp, loud report. Both rifles and ammo were expensive and .220 Swift barrels aren't noted for long life. Consequently the .222 Remington regular and magnum pretty well cornered the high velocity .22 centerfire market. The .225 is Winchester's effort to win some of this back.

In power the .225 Winchester is in the same identical class as the belted .224 Weatherby. Factory advertised velocity with the 55-gr. bullet is 3650 fps in both cases. There is not much to choose from performance-wise, but Winchester Model 70 rifles are substantially cheaper and mechanically just as good as the fancier Weatherby. In the final analysis that is largely what will determine the average person's choice. As to accuracy, that will be a matter of individual rifle plus what can be done by custom tuning. Both cartridges have shown excellent accuracy.

Winchester has indicated that they will eventually load a 60-gr. bullet at a muzzle velocity of 3500 fps and possibly also a 50-gr. at 3800 fps. If so, this will provide a wide choice of bullets to cover any possible varmint shooting situation.

The .225 Winchester has an edge over the .222 Rem. Mag. for long range shooting because it starts its bullet out at 300 to 350 fps higher velocity. To some individuals this will be a matter of importance. In actual practice it might not add up to any great advantage because the ability to connect at extreme ranges depends on other things besides flat trajectory. Killing power will be enhanced also, but even the regular .222 Rem. has all the power needed for varmint size animals. None of this is meant to disparage what is truly an excellent long range varmint cartridge. On the other hand, a few hundred feet per second increase in muzzle velocity does not necessarily render all similar cartridges obsolete. Primarily a varmint cartridge, the .225 Win. might be suitable for small deer if loaded with proper bullets.

Reloading Data and Factory Ballistics

Bullet (grs.)	Powder/grs.	MV	ME	
50	3031 32.3	3675	1500	
50	4895 36.2	3565	1411	
55	4320 35.0	3700	1672	
55	FL (muzzle)	3650	1630	
55	FL (100 yds.)	3140	1200	100 yd. MRT = 0.4"
55	FL (200 yds.)	2680	875	200 " " 1.8"
55	FL (300 yds.)	2270	630	300 " " 4.8"
55	FL (400 yds.)	1900	440	400 " " 10.0"
55	FL (500 yds.)	1560	295	500 " " 19.0"